

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PA-01 AGR-01
/065 W

-----036237 012035Z /61

R 012009Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5010
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL MUNICH
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: UR, ECON, ELAB
SUBJECT: RSRSR STATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR CHAIRMAN ON
SIBERIAN LABOR PROBLEMS

REF: A. MOSCOW 15845, B. MOSCOW A-174, C. MOSCOW A-95

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY. WRITING IN TRUD JULY 27, CHAIRMAN OF THE RSFSR
STATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR EXPRESSES CONCERN ON THE LABOR
SITUATION IN SIBERIA AND THE FAR EAST. STATING THAT THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THESE REGIONS WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT
ADDITIONAL LABOR RESOURCES, HE CONTENDS THAT MAN-MADE
PROBLEMS, RATHER THAN THE SEVERE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS, /
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RESPONSIBLE FOR NET MIGRATION FROM SOME REGIONS, AND
INSTABILITY IN THE LABOR FORCE. END SUMMARY.

1. SOZYKIN NAMES TYUMENSKAYA, IRKUTSKAYA, AND NOVO-
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SIBIRSKAYA OBLASTS AS EXAMPLES WHERE LAGS IN CONSTRUCTION
OF HOUSING AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, AND RESULTANT
SHORTAGES, ARE DISINCENTIVES TO WORKERS TO STAY. GLAV-
TYUMENNEFTEGAZ, FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE MEETING INDUSTRIAL TAR-
GETS IN 1977, FULFILLED ONLY 66 PERCENT OF ITS HOUSING
TARGETS, EVEN THOUGH ONLY 50.9 PERCENT OF ITS LABOR FORCE
HAVE ADEQUATE HOUSING. HE CITES THE "ORGANIZATION OF

LABOR" (POOR SUPPLY OF MATERIALS, LOW LEVEL OF MECHANIZATION, NON-USE OF WORKERS IN THEIR PROFESSIONS) AS ANOTHER CAUSE. ONE TRUST, BARNAULZHILSTROY, FOR EXAMPLE, IN 1976-77 WHILE HIRING 1186 WORKERS, LOST 1327. HE INDICATES THAT SOME REGIONS ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY RETAINING YOUTHS JUST LEAVING SCHOOL, WHO HE SAYS ARE THE BASIC SOURCE OF ADDITION TO THE LABOR FORCE. THUS IN KRASNOPYARSKIY KRAY, KHABAROVSKIY KRAY, AND TOMSKAYA OBLAST, ONLY 12.9, 11.8 AND 11.7 PERCENT OF YOUTHS LEAVING SCHOOL DECIDED TO WORK IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. HE NOTES ALSO THAT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LABOR FORCE IS REDUCED DUE TO POOR EDUCATION. HE ATTRIBUTES THIS TO A SHORTAGE OF PROFESSIONAL-TECHNICAL AND MIDDLE-SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS, AND TO POOR CONDITIONS AND A SHORTAGE OF MATERIALS IN ENTERPRISES AND AT CONSTRUCTION SITES WHERE WORKERS ARE TRAINED AND RETAINED.

2. DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE PROBLEMS ARE WELL KNOWN (REF C), HIS DISCUSSION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY INDICATES THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET DESIGNED VIABLE COUNTERMEASURES. BEYOND RECOMMENDING AN INCREASE IN MECHANIZATION AND LABOR SAVING DEVICES, HE MENTIONS ONLY THAT VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS HAVE STUDIED THE PROBLEM, AND SUGGESTS THAT "WE SHOULD STUDY THE CAUSES CREATING THE FLUIDITY OF LABOR, AND DEVELOP, INTRODUCE, AND IMPLEMENT PROPOSALS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE LABOR FORCE."
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3. COMMENT: SIZYKIN'S VIEWS PROVIDE AN INTERESTING CONTRAST TO THOSE HELD BY ONE OF HIS COUNTERPARTS, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE USSR STATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND WAGES SUKHAREVSKIY. IN CONVERSATION WITH E/C COUNSELOR AND EMBASSY OFFICER JULY 6, SUKHAREVSKIY MAINTAINED THAT THE WAGE DIFFERENTIAL OF 1.5 TO 2 OVER MOSCOW IS ENOUGH TO ATTRACT A SUFFICIENT WORK FORCE TO THESE AREAS (REF A). AS SOZYKIN POINTS OUT, HOWEVER, THE ISSUE IS NOT ONLY ATTRACTING THE WORK FORCE BUT RETAINING IT. SOVIET STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT IN THIS REGARD, WAGES DIFFERENTIALS PLAY ALMOST NO ROLE. RATHER, "COMFORT OF LIFE" AND WORK CONDITIONS ARE THE MAJOR CRITERIA BY WHICH WORKERS DECIDE TO REMAIN (REF C).

4. DEMAND BY WORKERS FOR "COMFORT OF LIFE" AND GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS IS ONE OF SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT COSTS WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO EXERT UPWARD PRESSURE ON PRODUCTION

COSTS OF GOODS AND RESOURCES (REF B). SUKHAREVSKIY DURING CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS ATTEMPTED TO ARGUE THAT AFTER INITIAL HIGH START UP COSTS, EXTRACTION OF SIBERIAN RESOURCES IS CHEAP, IMPLYING LONG TERM DECREASING COSTS IN SIBERIAN INDUSTRY. HOWEVER, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTRACTION OF RESOURCES IS ONLY ONE PART OF THE SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN: THE PLANS ALSO DEPEND ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY, FOR WHICH A STABLE LABOR FORCE WILL BE NECESSARY. THIS WILL ENTAIL SOMETHING MORE THAN A WAGE DIFFERENTIAL--PERHAPS BETTER LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS THAN IN EUROPEAN RUSSIA.

5. THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE OF RESOLVING THESE PROBLEMS IN

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SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PA-01 AGR-01
/065 W

-----036242 012035Z /61

R 012009Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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THE SHORT RUN: FAILURE TO FULFILL RESIDENTIAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION TARGETS IS ENDEMIC TO USSR AS A WHOLE AND PAST EFFORTS TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL. TODN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW18055
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780315-0129
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808112/aaaadqjl.tel
Line Count: 161
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c1286b59-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 15845, 78 MOSCOW A-174, 78 MOSCOW A-95
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1578755
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RSRSR STATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR CHAIRMAN ON SIBERIAN LABOR PROBLEMS
TAGS: ECON, ELAB, UR, STATE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c1286b59-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014